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**Unheard Possibilities: Reappraising Classical Film
Music Scoring and Analysis**

Celia A Sorhaindo, *Guabancex*

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REFERENCES

Celia A Sorhaindo, *Guabancex* (London: Papillote Press, 2020), 32 p, ISBN: 978-1-9997768-7-9

- 1 Celia A Sorhaindo is a Dominican poet who lived many years in the UK and went back home in 2005. Her poems have appeared in various Caribbean publications and in the anthology *New Daughters of Africa*.

- 2 *Guabancex* is her first poetry collection and is published by Papillote Press, a small, independent publishing house run by Polly Pattullo. The title of the collection refers to the supreme female deity of the Taino, one of the indigenous peoples of the Caribbean, associated with the power of nature.
- 3 The poems gathered in this first collection were inspired by the devastation caused by Maria, a category 5 hurricane which hit the island of Dominica on 18 September 2017 and wreaked havoc there, destroying many lives and scarring the land. This collection can thus be seen as a way of addressing the trauma associated with this hurricane: how do you start all over again after such a disaster?
- 4 The poems are presented chronologically, with the first ones in the collection dealing with the initial shock faced with such devastation, and the last poems focusing on the rebuilding process and the rebirth which follows trauma. What holds the collection together is the overarching theme of language as the ultimate resource to address trauma and shock, and sometimes language takes the form of mantras as in "Ajai Alai" or sign language in "Mudras". The very first poem in the collection, "A poem filled with words not metaphors", sets the tone: the poet claims to refuse to resort to conventional metaphors to describe the unspeakable and warns the reader against expecting a black and white rendering of the hurricane. The last lines are quite clear: "metaphor the world however you want"(1).
- 5 The second poem, "Hypotonic", makes its point by using a very concise style, culminating in that last line: "even now writing, I well up" (2). A variety of forms characterises this first collection, with very short pieces like "Hypotonic", extended meditations like "In The Air", and life-affirming epic poems like "Hurricane PraXis (Xorcising Maria Xperienced)". Change and its inexorable nature lie at the heart of the collection, with the poems "Metamorphosis" and "Horology-TimeXemi(tion)" making the point in a very subtle way.
- 6 Re-building and starting all over again are key themes in this first collection, and they are addressed very convincingly in two pieces: "Ode For Mum's Missing Roofing Screws" and "H25AZ (Strong Ties, Galvanized)". The former was inspired by Kwame Dawes' "Ode to the Clothesline" and was written in the style of Dawes' elegant couplets, making the point that, after the devastation wreaked by the hurricane, lamenting the loss of roofing screws which would have been used to cover the poet's mother's roof with tarpaulin seems futile and ridiculous. Still, the need to hold on to things is asserted, even if, as in Dawes' poem, the simple things of life have to be thankfully acknowledged once again.
- 7 The poem entitled "H25AZ ("Strong Ties, Galvanized") focuses on the rebuilding process after the hurricane as a symbol of life going on against all odds. The lesson seems to be that a lesson has been learnt and better things are bound to follow. As in the previous poem, the author takes simple objects as her starting point (here "rafters, hurricane ties, wall plates") and derives a lesson from the materiality of the building process. New words have been learnt, the new house will be better built, more resistant to future hurricanes. Hence the concluding lines:
 "They say you must have such cuts and ties to firmly lodge onto ledges –
 the price to be secure – to be more- permanent; more knowledgeable?"(18)
- 8 In *History of The Voice* the late Barbadian poet and critic Kamau Brathwaite famously wrote that the hurricane did not roar in pentameter, and that Caribbean poets had to learn how to find a rhythm, a language to describe their local experience. Celia A.

Sorhaindo seems to have found a way of rendering the sheer brutality of a hurricane in "Invoked", which evokes the various phases a hurricane goes through:

There is a toothless guabancex-grinning woman
called Mad Maria, living under a bus shelter in a
now bare-bone village. She spins
out skeletal arms and cackles
when they still tease, call her name,
relentlessly.
I gifted my daughter the family name
Maria. She struck on her 13th birthday.
She sang hauntingly with eyes closed the
whole crashing night till dawn. I did not know
her words but metronomed with shak-shak
teeth and knocking knees (17).

- 9 With these lines, Celia A. Sorhaindo replaces the hurricane experience within the matrix of Caribbean culture, with the references to the Taino deity associated with destruction, and to a Caribbean musical instrument. She thus makes sense of that experience in a poetic way, using words to deal with trauma.
- 10 That said, this collection also has plenty of light moments where optimism, humour, and hope win the day. In "Mudras", we are told about Dominicans' resilience and solidarity with other Caribbean people stranded on their island at a time when xenophobia could have raised its ugly head, and in the poem entitled "What Do I Know", the persona comes to the conclusion that everyone must now work to heal the world after the devastation heaped by the hurricane.
- 11 Kamau Brathwaite, Edward Baugh, Kwame Dawes, and Mervyn Morris haunt these poems. The poem entitled "Metamorphosis" brings to mind Morris' "The Roaches". Edward Baugh's poem "The Warner Woman" may have inspired "What Do I know". Other influences include W.S. Merwin and the Hungarian poet Sandor Petofi.
- 12 So Celia A. Sorhaindo is in very good company indeed, and this is an engaging and very promising first collection.

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